

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR IC NATO

SUBJECT: ICELAND BASE NEGOTIATIONS - SECOND ROUND, SECOND

SESSION - COMMENTARY

REF: POLTO 3

1. SUMMARY. SECOND SESSION WITH FONMIN AGUSTSSON INVOLVED DETAILED PRESENTATION OF US PROPOSALS AS REPORTED SEPTEL. HIS REACTION THAT THEY WERE INSUFFICIENT WAS IN LINE WITH ALL PREVIOUS INDICATIONS. HE DID NOT IN ANY SENSE REJECT THEM, BUT MADE PRETTY CLEAR HE WAS DISAPPOINTED NUMBER NOT HIGHER. FOR COSMETIC PURPOSES HE SEEMED PREPARED TO ACCEPT CONCEPT OF NOT COUNTING ROTATIONAL UNITS AGAINST IDF TOTAL. GROUNDWORK HAS BEEN LAID FOR ANOTHER ROUND NEXT MONTH, WHICH IN OUR VIEW SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.

2. FONMIN'S GAMBIT DURING THIS SESSION WAS ESSENTIALLY ONE OF PROBING DETAILS OF US OFFER TO REDUCE IDF MILITARY PERSONNEL, THROUGH DEDUCTION OF TOTALS FOR DEPLOYED UNITS AND THROUGH REPLACEMENT BY CIVILIANS, WHETHER ICELANDIC OR US. HE ASSERTED IT CONTAINED TOO FEW CHANGES FROM PRESENT SITUATION, AND WAS
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THEREFORE NOT SUFFICIENT FOR HIM TO OVERCOME THE POLITICAL OBSTACLE WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY OR WITHIN GOI. BOTH AGUSTSSON AND FOREIGN MINISTRY LEGAL ADVISER ANDERSEN PROBED SHARPLY INTO DETAILS, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO PRECISE NUMERICAL TOTALS.

ON OTHER HAND, THEY APPEARED WILLING TO ACCEPT FOR TIME BEING MY STATEMENT THAT THERE IS A POINT BEYOND WHICH FURTHER REDUCTIONS COULD NOT BE MADE WITHOUT ADVERSELY AFFECTING BASIC CORE FUNCTIONS OF IDF, WHICH MUST REMAIN MILITARY. MY POSITION WAS THAT WE HAD JUST ABOUT REACHED THAT POINT WITH PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TODAY.

3. ALTHOUGH INITIALLY SKEPTICAL REGARDING DEDUCTION OF DEPLOYED UNITS FROM IDF TOTAL, BY END OF MEETING FONMIN APPEARED WILLING TO ACCEPT THIS CONCEPT AS DEVICE BY WHICH HE COULD DEMONSTRATE TO ICELANDIC PUBLIC THAT IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS OF IDF WERE IN FACT BEING CARRIED OUT BY UNITS HOME-BASED ELSEWHERE.

4. IN HIS FORMAL TOAST AT LUNCH FOLLOWING THIS SESSION, AS WELL AS IN SUBSEQUENT PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS, AGUSTSSON CLEARLY INDICATED HIS DESIRE TO CONTINUE TALKS ON FRANK AND FRIENDLY BASIS, AND ACKNOWLEDGED THEIR IMPORTANCE TO OVERALL US-ICELANDIC RELATIONS. AFTER FORMAL MEETING, HE PROMISED TO PROVIDE EMBASSY HIS REACTION BY MIDDLE OF NEXT WEEK, WHICH WILL ENABLE US TO CONFIRM THIS PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT. THERE IS NO NEED FOR US TO TAKE ANY FURTHER INITIATIVES UNTIL WE HAVE HIS COMMENTS. IF AGUSTSSON PRESSES POINT, HOWEVER, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE DETAILED STRENGTH BREAKDOWN OF IDF COMPONENTS, IN ORDER TO MAKE CLEAR TO HIM WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL CORE FUNCTIONS THAT CANNOT BE REDUCED. MOREOVER, TOTAL REDUCTION OF MILITARY MANPOWER, EXCLUDING ROTATIONAL UNITS, MAY HAVE TO REACH 750-800.

5. COUPLING OF UNIFORM AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS ON MILITARY MEMBERS OF IDF WITH PROPOSED REDUCTIONS SHOULD BE HELPFUL IN SECURING RELAXATION ON PRESENT RESTRICTIONS. FONMIN STATED HE IS WELL AWARE OUR CONCERN THIS MATTER, BUT PREFERRED TO WAIT UNTIL BASIC UNDERSTANDING HAD BEEN ACHIEVED ON MILITARY REDUCTIONS BEFORE MAKING ANY CHANGES. HOWEVER, HE WOULD GIVE US HIS REACTIONS BEFORE NEXT MEETING. HE DID COMMENT THAT LIFTING OF PRESENT RESTRICTIONS WOULD BE LOGICAL PARALLEL TO PARTIAL CIVILIANIZATION OF IDF OVER NEXT SEVERAL YEARS, WHETHER WITH ICELANDIC OR US PERSONNEL, AND MORE-
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OVER WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH NATO PROCEDURE ELSEWHERE.

6. ONE IMPORTANT FAVORABLE INDICATOR IN THIS EQUATION IS UNMISTAKEABLY FRIENDLY ATTITUDE OF PRIMIN JOHANNESSON, WHO IS NOW FEELING NEW CONFIDENCE AS RESULT HIS PERSONAL INTERVENTION IN SETTLING UK FISHERIES DISPUTE AND SECURING ITS RATIFICATION BY ALTHING IN EARLY-MORNING HOURS OF SAME DAY IDF NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN (LATTER STARTED JUST AFTER SIGNING CEREMONY OF FINAL UK-GOI FISHERIES AGREEMENT). WHEN IDF NEGOTIATIONS ENTER SIMILAR CRUCIAL STAGES, IT IS LIKELY THAT PRIMIN WILL AGAIN PLAY IMPORTANT PERSONAL ROLE. FOR TIME BEING, HOWEVER, HE IS LEAVING MATTERS WHOLLY IN FOMIN'S HANDS.

7. ONE IMPORTANT UNRESOLVED MATTER IS LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING, NOW SCHEDULED MID-DECEMBER. ALTHOUGH AGUSTSSON PRESSED FOR ANOTHER MEETING HERE, WE BELIEVE HE CAN AND SHOULD BE PERSUADED TO COME TO WASHINGTON AT THAT TIME, WITH FOURTH AND FINAL ROUND TAKING PLACE IN REYKJAVIK IN MID-JANUARY. FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL STANDPOINT THIS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE CLIMAX TO NEGOTIATIONS, AS WELL AS PROVIDING PRELUDE TO ALTHING CONSIDERATION, NOW LIKELY TO BEGIN WHEN THAT BODY RESUMES ITS DELIBERATIONS DURING FIRST WEEK IN FEBRUARY. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO URGE THAT NEXT ROUND BE HELD IN WASHINGTON. BOTH SIDES FULLY RECOGNIZE THAT THIS TIMETABLE WILL EXTEND BEYOND SIX-MONTH PRIOD SPECIFIED IN ARTICLE V11 OF 1951 AGREEMENT, AND EMBASSY WILL PRESS PRIMIN NOT TO SUBMIT ANY PROPOSAL REGARDING IDF TO ALTHING UNTIL FEBRUARY. PORTER

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